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Cover:
Bishop Lovett laying the foundation stone in the first phase of the extension, 5 October 1935

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FROM PARISH CHURCH TO PORTSMOUTH CATHEDRAL 1900–39

E. K. Barnard, Lay Canon Emeritus

In 1900 St Thomas's Parish Church, situated in the High Street in Portsmouth, must have been by today's standards a depressing place. It was dark. The gallery extended right round the church, including the transepts, up to the chancel arch. This effectively blocked much light from all the windows at the lower level leaving only the dormers clear. The walls were not plastered and the bare stonework was pointed with protruding mortar to present a Victorian suggestion of antiquity.[1] *There was no means of heating the place which was illuminated by gas jets. The floor was wooden, covering bare earth which was honeycombed with scantily sealed graves and vaults. Needless to say the smell was unpleasant, but became noisome when the gas was lit.*

The Grant Memorial

The Vicar, the Revd Charles Darnell, was acutely aware of these shortcomings, and when the congregation wished to have a memorial to the previous vicar, Canon E. P. Grant,[2] he saw an opportunity to link the provision of heating and lighting to this project. This aroused opposition and after considerable discussion it was decided that the memorial should take the form of stained glass windows in the north transept. There was money in hand when the costs were met and Mr Darnell hoped that it might go towards the improvements he desired, but he was again frustrated by a decision to spend the surplus on more windows in the south transept.

Mr T. G. Jackson, the Winchester Diocesan Architect, and Mr A. H. Bone, a local architect, were consulted about the lower window in the south transept which the Vicar had described as a 'hideous square'.[3] They concluded that there had originally been two lancet lights which had been rebuilt to a single rectangular opening to conform with the late Wren style of the nave. They suggested the reintroduction of the original style, each light to be one foot and ten inches in breadth. The budget for coloured glass in these two lights was limited to £50 0*s*. 0*d*. and Jones and Willis were commissioned from drawings to produce 'The Sower' and 'The Light of the World' for this figure.

When the outside wall of the transept was stripped for the necessary building work, to everyone's surprise the remains of the two ancient lights were found. These were slightly different in size from those planned and for which the glass had already been made.

The Vicar at once wrote to Jones and Willis to enquire if the glass could be altered to fit the original windows, but they replied that this was not possible and that if a change was required, the windows would have to be completely remade.[4] Poor Mr Darnell felt himself to be in a terrible quandary. The available money had been spent on glass which would not fit and a faculty had already been granted for the architect's plans. The only solution would be to destroy the remains of the ancient windows. The Bishop of Winchester was consulted and he agreed that this should be done.[5]

This proved to be the right decision because Mr Bone subsequently found that the ancient stone could not have been used as it was decayed and crumbling.[6] Thus the Grant Memorial was completed with 'The Sower' and 'The Light of the World', somewhat pedestrian works, but much admired at the time.

The Restoration

The arrangements for lighting, heating and ventilating the church were left to the management of the Vicar and Churchwardens who commissioned Mr Bone to draw up and cost a scheme.[7] His plans were accepted at a Vestry Meeting on 10 October 1901, but only after a protest had been made that they did not include the sealing of the floor, elimination of the high-backed old-fashioned pews and the cleansing of the walls and ceilings. It was clear that such suggestions caused considerable sentimental antipathy in the congregation.

However, someone who had considerable knowledge of the church, but who remained unnamed, wrote to the Bishop pointing out that the chancel walls were bulging and the place was unsafe. The Vicar was obliged to take action and called in Mr Jackson who inspected the site on 17 January 1902.[8] He immediately had a large timber strut erected between the north and south rounded arches at the western end of the chancel to prevent a possible collapse. He then made a thorough examination and submitted a detailed report[9] in April 1902, disclosing that the cause of the dangerous bulging was the undermining of the pillars by graves and vaults.

To make the building safe it would be necessary to support it on scaffolding and excavate the floor so that the pillars could be underpinned. He suggested that the chancel should be boarded off by forming a screen so that the rest of the church could remain in use. On 6 October 1902 work commenced and a screen covering the chancel arch and the side aisles was erected.[10] When the floor was opened, the peril in which the structure stood was clearly revealed and supportive measures were taken at once to ensure safety. The graves and vaults were exposed and the Vicar described the finding of coffins, skulls and bones of all kinds. The diocesan faculty authorising the restoration required that all human remains should be decently reinterred, so the greatest care was taken and a shed was erected in the churchyard as a temporary resting place.[11]

The work had only gone on for two days when the stench from the open vaults, polluted soil and decomposing remains became so overpowering that the Medical

The strut erected across the chancel to prevent a threatened structural collapse.

Officer of Health, Dr A. Mearns Fraser, inspected the works and ordered the closure of the church.[12]

The Vicar had thrown himself energetically into the project despite the opposition of the congregation. It must have been an anxious and gruesome time for him. He wrote to the Bishop on 13 October:[13]

> The state of the church is bad beyond description and it is quite out of the question to use it again till all has been put right. The effect of the excavations has been to make our people feel the necessity of putting to rights what has for many years been wrong. Ever since I came here I have felt the iniquity of the present state of matters and, as you know, have done my best to bring our people to recognise it. But until the church was laid bare, as has been necessitated by the dangerous condition of the structure owing to the faulty pillar which is now in Mr Jackson's hands, the existence of the evil was only a matter of opinion and could not be proved. Now the proof is with us. The whole church as well as the chancel is a mass of graves, coffins, and decomposing remains. Of this there is no doubt. The whole church must be treated as the chancel is now being treated. I will let you know how matters go on, for it is a most important crisis in the history of the church. Now the chancel is opened and the pews removed, Mr Jackson, who was here last week, says that we have not been a day too soon to save the church and that it is simply wonderful how the arches have hung together. I now feel that the parish is with me and only anxious to face the question and do the right thing and this, after the grievous opposition of the past, is a source of comfort to me. I feel quite assured and more than hopeful for what will be done. The pews can never be replaced, so the architect and builders say, and as it may be, I trust, possible in the near future to teach our children in the church which has so far been impossible from the height of the pews. Eventually with your help I feel that we shall be able to put things right.

Mr Jackson proposed the provision of a brick vault beneath the chancel for the disposal of the remains to be permanently sealed so that no effluvium could escape in future. This course was taken.[14]

In mid-December 1902 Mr Darnell was taken ill with typhoid fever with septicemia supervening. All efforts to save his life were fruitless and he died on 6 January 1903.[15] In his obituary, the Portsmouth *Evening News* wrote

> The object of his life was the transformation of the old church so as to bring it into conformity with modern thought and methods and in the prosecution of that object he sacrificed his life. We lay at his feet our tribute of sorrow and respect.

St Mary's Church, Colewort, a Victorian chapel of ease, was fully licenced to become the temporary parish church.

In May 1903 the Revd Robert Sumner Medlicott was inducted as the new Vicar.[16] He quickly grasped the situation and pushed forward energetically. Mr Jackson had reported that the nave would require treatment similar to the chancel. The seating was removed, the floor taken up and the remains were exhumed, to be finally replaced in permanently sealed vaults when the necessary restoration work was completed. By June 1904 this was finished[17] in the chancel and the cost was met by Winchester College as Patron and Lay Rector of the church. By September the work on the nave, including removal of the galleries in the transepts, was far enough advanced for the Vicar to announce the date for the re-opening of the restored and completely sanitary church on Tuesday 8 November 1904.[18]

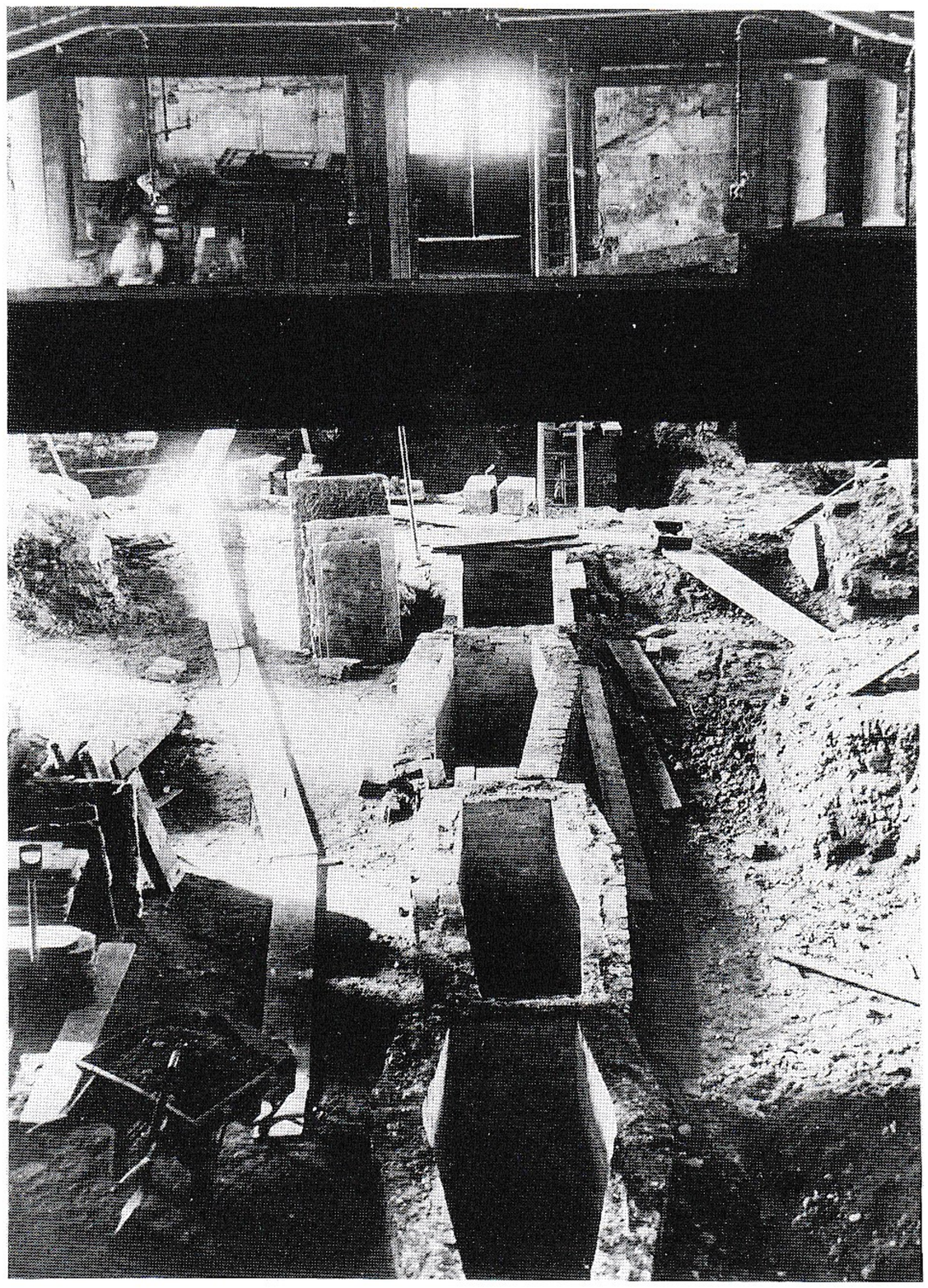
The cost of the work in the nave had been estimated at £6,000 of which £2,754 had already been subscribed. There had also been two notable gifts. The brass eagle lectern which is in use today was presented by King Edward VII,[19] and a set of very fine wrought-iron communion rails by Mr and Mrs W. H. Barrell.

Finance and Administration

At the turn of the century there was no welfare state and most of the services which are now administrated by the authorities were handled by the parish and depended greatly on charity. Portsmouth parish was no exception as the accounts clearly show. Between April 1900 and March 1901 the offertory receipts were £993 8*s*. 0*d*. which paid for the light and heat, repairs, cleaners, organist and choir, ringers, insurance, gas and stationery. The Vicar's Parochial Account and the Sick and Poor Fund between them covered the Green Row Rooms, Sunday Schools and Missions with support for the Coal Club, Blanket Club, Shoe Club, Mothers' Meeting and Savings Club and the Industrial Clothing Society.[20] There was much real poverty as a note in a wants column in the Parish Magazine indicates: 'Old linen rags for use among the sick and poor badly needed', and in a later issue, 'Some more rags for dressing wounds wanted. Our supply is nearly exhausted. They are sorely needed'. The irony of the last phrase must have passed unnoticed in those hard times. In addition to all their usually accepted duties, the Vicar and Churchwardens were responsible for the upkeep of the parish Almshouse situated in Highbury Street next to the Masonic

Hall.[21] The building was very old and a survey early in 1907 showed that age and past neglect were taking their toll. The building contained ten rooms inhabited by old ladies of good character who had been selected as worthy. One of the rooms had become vacant and as it had not been cleaned and decorated for many years, wardens had the necessary work carried out, installing a tiny oven range in place of the open grate, so that the occupant was saved the expense of a visit to the bakehouse for a roast meal. Naturally, all the ladies wished to have similar improvements to their rooms. The upstairs residents had to pay someone to carry water up to them so a tap was installed on the upper landing to the great satisfaction of all. The privy in the open yard was in such a deplorable state that it had to be pulled down and an entirely new building put up in a position to save the inmates having to go outside. The cost of this work was defrayed by an appeal and by midsummer the necessary £51 had been subscribed and, in addition, electric light had been installed free of charge by a generous benefactor.

Another parish building to be completely refurbished and to have electricity installed was the Green Row Rooms.[22] They had become part of the parish in May 1812 when the site and the existing buildings at the corner of St Nicholas Street and Green Row, now Pembroke Road, were bought for £1,100 from the trustees of the late Mrs Mary Judson for the Society for Educating the Infant Poor in the True Principles of the Church according to the



method recommended by the Revd Dr Andrew Bell, formerly of Madras. Existing buildings on the site, including a bakehouse, were demolished and a building with large and smaller rooms suitable as a school or for entertainments was erected. An oval plaque proclaiming its purpose as above appeared on the front of the edifice. There was a mortgage of £900 on this building for which St Thomas's was responsible. The ground floor was the school and the upper rooms were at first let for balls, cards, meetings and refreshments, but this was discontinued as the place became used increasingly for parochial purposes. The Green Row Rooms played an important part in local life.

In January 1909 there was an important development in the work of the parish.[23] The buildings of the Warblington Street Mission were acquired as part of the pastoral machinery. The Vicar was able to arrange the purchase with the co-operation of Lloyds Bank, so that only £100 was actually paid. Since their erection in 1902 there had been a debt of some £400 which was transferred to the Vicar, Mr Lothian Bonham-Carter and Mr William Read on behalf of the parish. The documents were held by the Bank as security.

The £100 purchase money came from the accumulated endowment of St Mary's Church, Colewort, which had been closed in 1906. This arrangement seemed entirely satisfactory, as it provided a mission for the people living in the environs of St Mary's in a more suitable building than the church itself could ever have been.

During the 1914–18 war St Mary's was being used as an army storehouse[24] and any remaining furnishings were put on one side. While removing old altar rails belonging to St Thomas's which had been stored there, the following was found on a weatherworn slip of paper between the wood and metal of the rails.

> James Cantle and William Finner, Carpenters,
> fixed this rail July 1828.
> 'When this you see
> Remember wee'.

Until July 1921 this church remained a parish responsibility[25] and, as it was something of a liability, it was decided to demolish it. It was sold to Mr F. W. Pounds of Fratton who used much of the material in the construction of a cinema.

Embellishments

In August 1907, Alderman Thomas King died.[26] He was a prominent figure in the town, having been mayor in 1894. In his will he left £400 to extinguish the remainder of the mortgage on the Green Row Rooms and also £300 for the erection of a stained glass window and a memorial tablet on the north side of the chancel.

On Easter Day 1908 a new altar frontal was used for the first time.[27] It was a gift from the congregation who subscribed the sum of £35 for its cost. The central theme is the Tree of Life, an oak with spreading branches resting in which are six shields bearing emblems of saints connected with travel and the sea. The words at the foot of the frontal, 'Peace to men of Good Will on earth' was the text of Becket's last sermon at Christmas 1170. The frontal is still in use.

In June 1909 Mr George Long died.[28] He had been a churchwarden and was a prominent figure in the town and parish. A banker by profession he lived in Bank House at the corner of High Street and Grand Parade for forty years, and it is no exaggeration to say that in some way or another, he was identified with every movement for the spiritual and moral well-being of the borough for fifty years. Alderman King's legacy had been sufficient to pay for three windows and it was decided that a fourth to complete a series depicting historic figures connected with the town and church should be placed on the south wall as part of a memorial to Mr Long's outstanding personality. It was dedicated in July 1910.

Tower and Cupola

At this time the need to attend to restoration work on the tower and cupola was becoming more urgent[29] but it was felt that this could not be undertaken until the existing debt for the previous restoration, between £800 and £900,

Open graves in the centre of the nave.

was cleared off. A special effort was needed and after much discussion it was decided that a three-day bazaar in the Town Hall might raise the desired sum. The dates of 21, 22 and 23 June were reserved.

In spite of the sudden death of Edward VII the bazaar went forward and was a splendid success showing final receipts of £1,092 1*s*. 5*d*. which finally eliminated the restoration debt and left a balance of £90 towards work on the tower.[30] A Tournament of National Dances contributed much to this success.[31]

The most important event in 1911 was the Coronation of George V and Queen Mary in June, with all the majesty of a great Naval Review in Spithead at which ships from many nations were welcomed. Old Portsmouth celebrated the occasion by arranging for the tower of St Thomas's to be outlined by electric lights.[32] This was considered a great success, the illumination being clearly visible from Portsdown Hill and the Isle of Wight.

In December 1911 Mr Jackson submitted a report showing that some work upon the timber structure of the cupola was necessary; the masonry was in reasonably good condition.[33] The committee elected to oversee this work chose to do a thorough job rather than patching.[34] June brought the gratifying news that the King would contribute £25 to the tower restoration. The whole peal of eight bells was to be recast and it was suggested that certain sections of the community in the borough should each provide the money for a bell and put a suitable inscription upon it. The following plan was adopted.[35]

The Treble. To be recast by the children of the town.
Inscription: Ring out the false, ring in the true.
£10 0*s*. 0*d*.

No. 2. To be recast by the clergy of the Deanery.
Inscription: Ring in the common love of good.
£10 0*s*. 0*d*.

No. 3. To be recast by the doctors of the town.
Inscription: Health and prosperity to all our benefactors. £12 0*s*. 0*d*.

No. 4. To be recast by the lawyers of the town.
Inscription: Peace and good neighbourhood.
£15 0*s*. 0*d*.

No. 5. To be recast by the army.
Inscription: God save King George. £18 0*s*. 0*d*.

No. 6. To be recast by the King's gift.
Inscription: Recast by His Majesty King George.
£25 0*s*. 0*d*.

No. 7. To be recast by the navy.
Inscription: God save our King, Queen, Prince and Fleet. £35 0*s*. 0*d*.

No. 8. To be recast by the residents of the parish repeating the ancient
Inscription: We good people all to prayers do call,
We honour the King and brides joy do bring,
Good tidings we tell and ring the dead's knell.
(The names of the Vicar and Churchwardens followed). £76 0*s*. 0*d*.

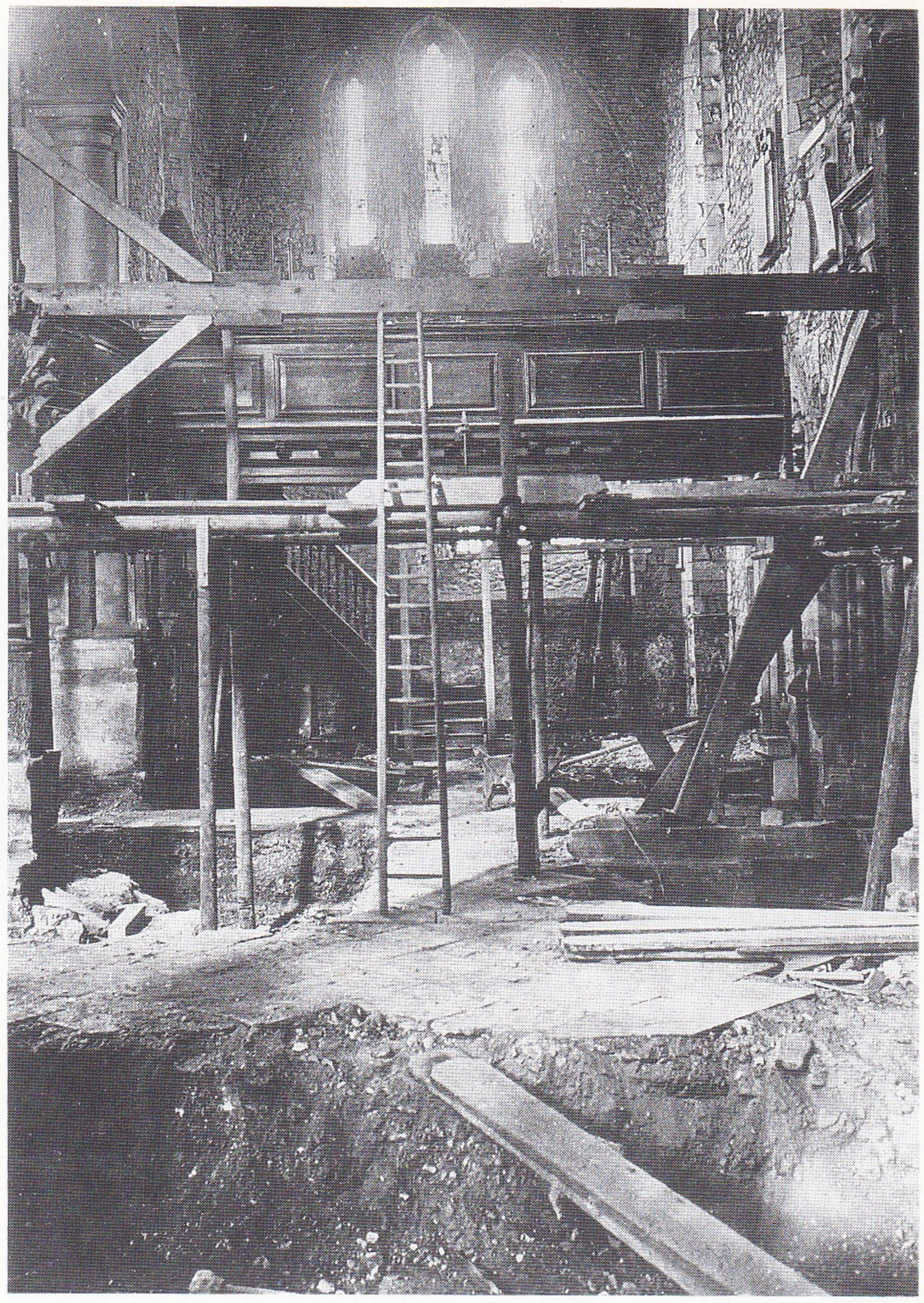
Great satisfaction was evinced on all sides in November 1912[36] when the recast bells were rehung in a slightly lower position in the tower, and January 1913 saw the work almost complete with the Golden Barque, Cupola, Tower and Bells all in proper order, but with a bill for £400 outstanding for costs.[37]

War and Change

The year 1913 saw the publication of the report of the Archbishop's Committee on Church Finance.[38] It recommended that there should be a Central Board of Finance for the whole Church of England, and that each diocese should have a similar board. These boards would be responsible for budgeting the monetary needs of each diocese. The needs would be broken down to ruri-decanal level and a sum apportioned to each parish to raise annually. Thus the Quota System came into being, to be fully operative by January 1915. Possible developments along these lines led the Vicar to feel that St Thomas's should have a Parochial Church Council[39] and, after a period of investigation and preparation, the first PCC consisting of eighteen members (12 men and 6 women) was elected on 6 December 1913. One third of the elected members (4 men and 2 women) were to retire annually and the vacancies be filled by an election.

War against Germany was declared in August 1914 and there was an immediate call for recruits. Lord Kitchener's appeal was fully supported by the Bishop and the Vicar in published letters calling on able-bodied men to enlist.[40]

In August 1915 what had been privately known since July became public, namely, the announcement of Mr Medlicott's resignation from the vicarage.[41] He was to become Rector of Burghclere, in the north of Hampshire, early in October. A moderate churchman, he was clearly the leader and inspiration of his congregation. He had the gift of being able to delegate tasks to the right people, and achieved outstanding support from some families still well-known in Portsmouth whose names appear again and again in records of work for the church and its dependent



The north transept during restoration.

The north transept after restoration. Note that the gallery has been removed.

missions. The services were according to the Book of Common Prayer and were conducted without ritual as befitted the civic church of the borough. The choir, under the direction of Mr R. H. Turner, was capable and widely appreciated.

The name of his successor to the benefice became public in October – the Revd W. Hermann David.[42] He left the Headmastership of Kelly College, Tavistock, in 1907 to become an assistant master at Marlborough College until his coming to Portsmouth. He was a Wykehamist and a scholar of New College, Oxford. Mrs David was a cousin of Mr Medlicott who strongly recommended them both to the congregation.

Resolutions were passed in the PCC meeting on 28 October appreciating Mr Medlicott's twelve years in the parish and expressing regret at his resignation. Another resolution thanked subscribers to the Testimonial Fund which, at Mr Medlicott's wish, was used for the settlement of the restoration debt.

The induction of the Revd W. H. David took place on 15 December 1915.[43] The Archdeacon of Winchester was unable to be present owing to illness, but Canon (later Archbishop) Garbett took his place at short notice and conducted an inspiring service.

Mercifully the losses in the parish in the Battle of Jutland were few.[44] However, the anxiety of the time is painfully evident in contemporary utterances. It was decided that money collected for the overhaul of the organ should be used to provide comforts for the wounded and prisoners of war.[45]

In April 1917 the suspense and excitement aroused by the Russian revolution, the dramatic German retreat and the fall of Baghdad were evident,[46] but it was equally clear that the submarine war at sea was causing serious anxiety and everybody was exhorted to practice the utmost economy in the household. There was no organised system of rationing but it was said that bread consumption should be limited to 3lbs per person per week. The Vicar ordered that there should be no treats, teas, socials or outings till the war ended. There was concern at the increase of drunkenness among women and general anxiety about their moral welfare.[47] Wages were good and more money was available for war work; women were lonely and their lives upset by the absence of their menfolk. As a measure of practical help, there was a scheme to open a coffee-house in the old town as an alternative to the public house. This was done and St Thomas's Café was opened in Nobbs Lane. It had a rest room in the rear where women and girls could discuss the war news and receive help in need or read and write letters. Miss Barrett, a church worker, was available to help where necessary.

The year 1918 opened with a feeling of optimism; the war was at a critical stage. It was disclosed that 13,000 parcels of foodstuffs had been sent by the Portsmouth Prisoners of War Fund to Germany, literally saving some men from starvation.[48] It was in this year that an epidemic of a severe type of influenza struck causing many deaths among both young and old in the civilian population.[49] On 11 November an armistice was proclaimed and the war was at an end. Heartfelt thanksgiving services were held throughout the nation, and on 14 December the first complete peal of 5,040 changes of Grandsire Triples since the bells were recast was rung in three hours and eighteen minutes by the Winchester Diocesan Guild of Change Ringers.[50]

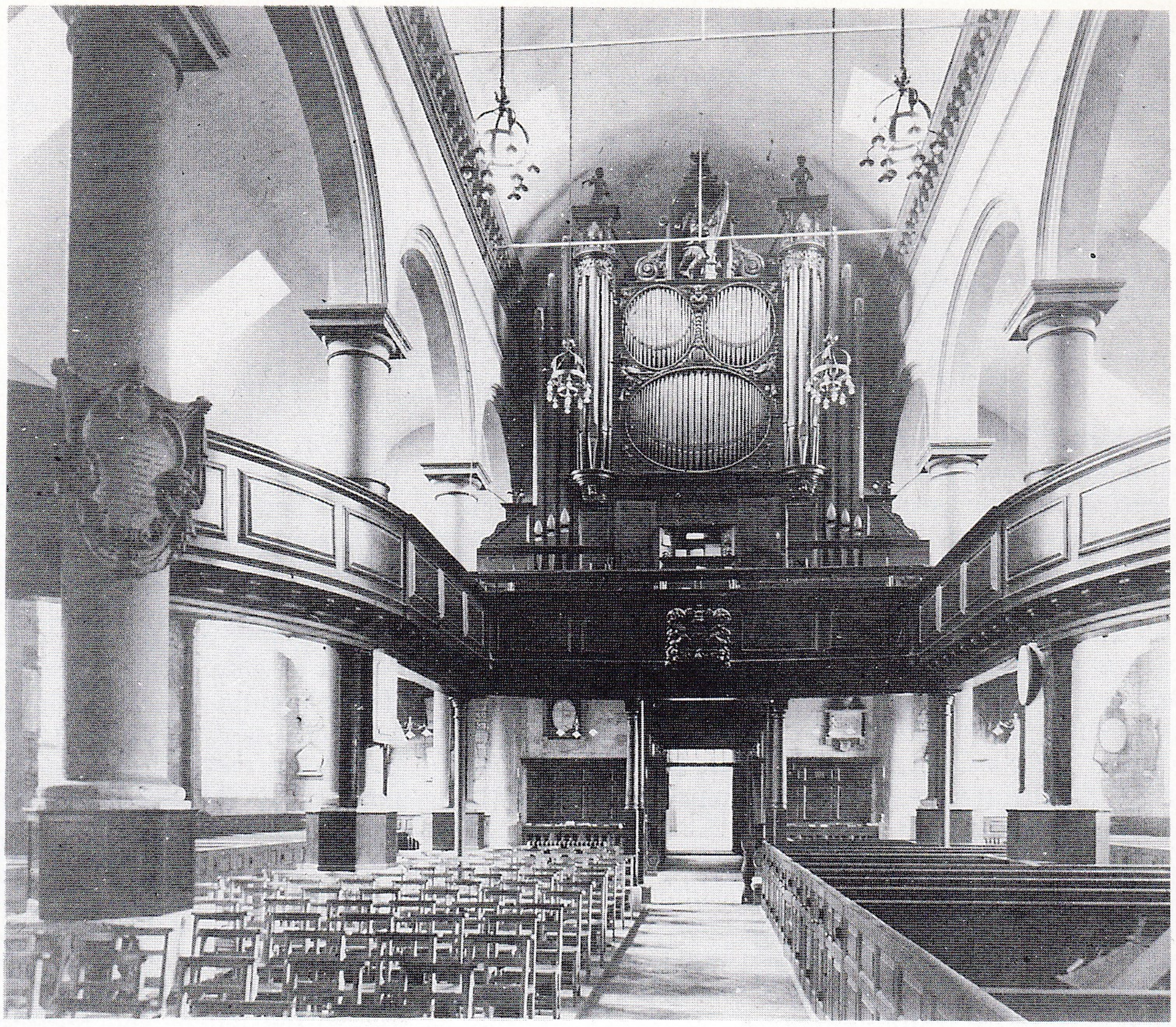
Peace

In the first year of peace – 1919 – the parish was beginning to consider what form their war memorial should take. The erection of a stone cross in the churchyard as a memorial to the fallen, and the rebuilding of the organ as a thanksoffering for peace found favour.[51] Discussion had also been going on between the Vicar and the Gillman family about a private memorial for Major Angus George Gillman, MC, who had been killed in France.[52] In June a plan to replace the Victorian arcade in the east wall was disclosed. This feature, having no relation to the Early English architecture, was generally admitted to have been a mistake in the light of discoveries made when the Buckingham memorial was moved in 1844. When the wooden backing screen was taken down, a pointed arch with a lancet window in the centre was revealed. These were sketched by R. H. C. Ubsdell during the few hours they were visible before the arcading was erected.[53] It was now desired to find out if they had suffered damage. After examination of the wall by Sir Thomas Jackson, they were found to be intact and plans for their preservation went forward.

After many delays and much discussion agreement was reached about the parish memorial. Five designs for a cross had been rejected but finally one submitted by C. W. Bevis & Son was chosen and this was put in hand to be built by the firm of H. G. Wilkins in Stamshaw Road in 1920.[54]

The form of the Gillman memorial had been decided. The arcading was to be removed to reveal the arch and lancet suitably restored. An oak reredos carved by Brindley and Farmer was to be provided for the altar. Coloured glass depicting a likeness of Major Gillman clad as St George kneeling at the feet of Christ and holding a standard lowered as a token of victory was to fill the lancet.

The order to start the restoration of the organ was given to the Southampton firm of Ivimey in March 1920.[55] Funds were coming in very slowly to meet the cost and the Vicar



felt it necessary to explain that the organ was not to be enlarged, but only those portions which were absolutely worn out were to be replaced. The hand-worked bellows would go and be replaced by electric apparatus. A new console facing the choir in the gallery was to be provided.

The National Church Assembly Act, known as the Enabling Act, was passed in 1920, the immediate and important effect being to make the Parochial Church Council a statutory body.[56] The old voluntary PCC was abolished and the election for a new one took place on 15 April. Only those who were on the Electoral Roll by 15 March were entitled to vote.

During the next few years parish life went on normally. For example, the annual Vestry and Parochial Meeting on 6 March 1922[57] disclosed an electoral roll of 732 names and a credit balance of £27 18s. 3d. Admiral Grant, Churchwarden, foreshadowed certain necessary tasks. The clock required repairs which would cost £40. The churchyard needed attention, an outlay of £50. The Organ Fund was still £300 in debt and it was proposed to increase the Vicar's stipend by £100 per annum. However, parochial matters tended to be overshadowed by events upon the wider diocesan stage.

Diocesan Division

In July 1920 the stirrings of future events came to the surface.[58] The *Church Times* remarked

> In some respects the diocese (Winchester) is the most difficult in the country, stretching from the Surrey suburbs of London to the Channel Islands in sight of France, besides containing all Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, West Surrey and the populous sea ports of Portsmouth and Southampton. Its division, imperative a quarter of a century ago, is now overdue.

Division had been considered as early as 1910 and then onwards but had not progressed beyond talk. At this time (1920) the diocese consisted of 580 parishes and a population of 1,300,000 souls. The area covered was so large that the expenses of travelling from the remote parts debarred many of the clergy and laity from attending important meetings and services in Winchester.[59] They were out of touch with their bishop and with each other.

In September, a letter from Canon Kirwan, Rural Dean of Guildford, appeared in the press advocating the division of the Diocese of Winchester by cutting off the Archdeaconry of Surrey, plus probably Aldershot, and making Guildford the centre of a diocese.[60] At the Diocesan Conference held in Winchester on 11 October 1920, Lord Selbourne made a proposal that the diocese should be divided and that a committee be appointed to draw up a scheme to effect it.[61] The final plan defined[62] a diocese of Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight, consisting of the archdeaconry of the Isle of Wight, the rural deaneries of Portsmouth, Havant, Alverstoke, and the greater part of the rural deaneries of Petersfield and Bishop's Waltham. There would be a diocese of Guildford, consisting of the archdeaconry of Surrey and a number of neighbouring parishes in the general district of Aldershot, and, finally, a diocese of Winchester with the remainder of the diocese.

The nave after restoration.

The Bishop, the Right Revd Edward Talbot, welcomed the proposals at the Diocesan Conference in May 1921.[63] He felt that a new diocese in West Surrey was inevitable. The suggestion of a diocese of Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight presented prodigious financial difficulties, but the great church at Portsea stood ready to be a cathedral. Viscount Woolmer, MP, moved the adoption of the proposals. He disclosed that Guildford would contain approximately 340,000 population with 140 parishes and 230 clergy. Portsmouth would have a population of 460,000, 135 parishes and 220 clergy. The truncated diocese of Winchester would have 575,000 population, 310 parishes and 430 clergy. After debate, in which determined opposition from a faction in the Isle of Wight became apparent, the motion was passed with only three dissentient votes. The Diocesan Conference held on Tuesday 13 June 1922 completed the process started in 1920 when the principle of division was agreed.[64] The Conference of 1921 passed the outline plan and now decisions of detail were required. The Bishop, counselling patience, recognised that there was still unreconciled opposition to the scheme which had yet to pass several important committees of the Church Assembly to which it was now proposed to send it. Opposition again came from the Isle of Wight, but in the end the motion was passed with only six dissenting votes.

The details of the boundaries of the new diocese were now decided. The following parishes situated in the Bishop's Waltham and Petersfield deaneries were to be excluded from the new diocese: Bishopstoke, Eastleigh, Fair Oak, Hedge End, Grayshott and Headley. The parish of Blackmoor from the Alton rural deanery was to be included, while Hamble was to remain in the diocese of Winchester.

In November 1922 there was still opposition[65] to the formation of a diocese of Portsmouth from some bishops and also a body of clergy beneficed in the area on the grounds that Portsmouth was a decaying and dissolute place[66] unlikely to be able to meet the financial needs of a diocese which could only be described as 'pauper'. However, the National Assembly of the Church of England finally approved the Diocese of Winchester (Division) Measure 1923, and it passed both Houses of Parliament to become law in August 1924. It now only remained to raise the money necessary to initiate the scheme.[67]

In August 1923 the retirement of Bishop Talbot was announced[68] and he was succeeded by Bishop Theodore Woods who was enthroned in January 1924. Committee work to organise the new diocese went on apace. A house suitable as the bishop's residence was found at Fareham, [69] namely Blackbrook House, subsequently renamed Bishopswood. The purchase price of £5,800 had to be raised.

The year 1926 closed with an appeal for money by the Bishop of Winchester. The Bishopric of Portsmouth could not start to function without the necessary funds and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners could not give the certificate to require the Prime Minister to nominate the new bishop until these were in hand.

The final result of so many prayers and so much ardent debate[70] came on 1 May 1927 by an order of the King's Most Excellent Majesty in Council dated 22 April 1927 and coming into operation on 1 May 1927. The main provisions were first the founding of the Bishopric of Portsmouth, secondly the Diocese of the said Bishopric was declared to consist of the Archdeaconries of the Isle of Wight and Portsmouth then in the Diocese of Winchester. Lastly, the Parish Church of St Thomas, Portsmouth, (subject to the rights of the Patron and Incumbent thereof) was declared to be the Cathedral Church of the Bishopric. Colonel W. H. Barrell defrayed the costs of a grant of arms for the Bishop which could also be used by the Diocese.[71]

A Cathedral ?

In 1920, following almost directly upon the decision that a diocese of Portsmouth was to be created, came the question of a cathedral. It was recognised as the right of a new diocese, when it became fully operative, to make its own policy in this matter. It could choose an existing building as cathedral or it might decide to build an entirely new one. It was necessary, however, until the policy was determined, for the new bishop to have his cathedra, that is, his throne, set in a consecrated building. Thus an existing church had to be chosen as pro-cathedral.

In Portsmouth it was taken for granted right from the beginning that the choice would fall upon St Mary's, Portsea. At the Ruri-decanal Conference held on 21 July 1921,[72] the relative merits of St Mary's and St Thomas's were discussed. The Rural Dean, the Revd L. E. Blackburne, outlined the advantages of each church.

St Mary's was the largest church in the proposed diocese and capable of holding large congregations on important occasions. There was already a large staff, a parish institute and a garden, all valuable for diocesan purposes. Furthermore, it was in a central position and there was a certain amount of land for building a chapter house if desired. Sentiment came in too, for St Mary's was the oldest parish in the town.

For St Thomas's, he said it was the oldest ecclesiastical building in Portsmouth which was a most valuable link with the past. It was very accessible, particularly for the Island, and had more dignified surroundings than St Mary's. It was near the Town Hall and was the civic church of the town. After much discussion there was a vote, and

the choice fell overwhelmingly in favour of St Mary's. There followed much discussion and debate carried on largely through the press. Then on 12 August *The Hampshire Telegraph* cleared the air by pointing out that no decision about the pro-cathedral could be made until the division of the diocese was settled. All discussion about a pro-cathedral was premature.

On 29 September 1922 *The Hampshire Telegraph* stated that[73]

> Anything that can be done to restore Old Portsmouth to its pristine greatness or even to restore some portion of the life and activity that formerly characterised it, will rejoice the hearts of all who have an affection for the old town. In this connection, therefore, a proposal to be laid before the next Diocesan Conference will arouse great interest; it is that the parish church of St Thomas should be the new Cathedral Church of the Diocese of Portsmouth and Wight. Although St Thomas's cannot compare with St Mary's for size and imposing appearance, it is immeasurably the more interesting.

There follows a comparison of the age and history of St Thomas's with the modern Gothic of St Mary's and putting forward an altogether favourable aspect for St Thomas's.

The conference of the Portsmouth rural deanery was to take place on Monday 16 October 1922 and it was clear that the news of the proposition before the next diocesan conference that St Thomas's should be the diocesan cathedral had aroused strong feeling and led to a mobilisation of influential supporters of St Mary's. The *Portsmouth Evening News* of Tuesday 17 October gives a detailed account of the proceedings.

Canon E. Blackburne presided over a meeting of some 150 people and at once expressed surprise that a definite proposal had appeared on the diocesan agenda. He pointed out that five deaneries were concerned and not Portsmouth alone. Mr W. A. Colbran, the secretary of St Mary's PCC, was the first speaker, opening with a spirited exposition of the case for his church. He was astonished, he said, that the matter should have been brought before the conference again. It had been settled in the minds of most people for more than a year. There had been overwhelming majorities in favour of St Mary's in the parishes and it seemed to have the blessing of the Bishop. He mused upon the possible ideals of a cathedral: a retreat with a quiet atmosphere where saintly and learned clergy might retire: or a lively church in the heart of the population, such as St Mary's, which could seat a thousand people. It had no antiquated pews and was not situated in a dying part of Portsmouth. He moved that this conference should reaffirm the previous decision that St Mary's should be the pro-cathedral. The motion was seconded by Lt Cdr Housego who could not find one point in favour of St Thomas's, and remarked that St Mary's was the older parish by ten years. Mr H. J. Bechervaise spoke in favour of the motion, saying that a rejection would subject them all to ridicule. The representative of St Jude's, Colonel Gaitskell, reported that his PCC had voted for St Mary's by 27 votes to 2.

Both the Rural Dean and Mr C. Richards disagreed with the last speaker, maintaining that the true interests of the new diocese should be their first consideration. The church which would best fit those needs should be their choice. The choice should be St Mary's, said Mr A. V. Palmer, adding that people who did not agree with this should be locked up in an asylum. It was reported that St Paul's and St Agatha's also favoured St Mary's.

The next speaker, the Revd Norman Higgins, Vicar of All Saints, brought some fresh thoughts to the meeting. His ideas had been changed, he said, by information which had come to him in connection with other new dioceses. He took the example of Coventry where it had been proved that it was almost hopeless to run a vast parochial organisation coupled with the life of a cathedral. One felt that the work and parochial life of St Mary's had been built up for generations and was continuing on the soundest lines. If that parish life was to suffer, then the Kingdom of God in Portsmouth would suffer. He was in favour of St Thomas's.

The Revd W. H. Tate then introduced a complete change of direction. He emphasised that the church chosen should be centrally situated. He moved an amendment that St Michael's would be the most suitable, being in the centre of the town. The Revd L. Corban did not want a triangular vote and suggested that in the case of St Michael's the parish-plus-cathedral impasse could be avoided by dividing its insignificant parish among the neighbouring parishes of St Luke and St Paul.

Mr H. A. Dart of St Thomas's then spoke in favour of his church being serviceable to the new diocese.

The Revd R. O'Gorman Power showed insight. The conference, he said, was not conferring an honour but asking for a sacrifice. They wanted a parish to sacrifice itself and act for some years as a pro-cathedral. He did not think it fair to run the risk of injuring one of the finest organised parishes in England by imposing on it the crushing weight of a cathedral.

Major Hannington, in supporting St Thomas's, pointed out that the arrangement would be a temporary one. If St Mary's was chosen, it would in future be argued time and again when they wanted to build a new cathedral, that they already had a church large enough. They would never get

a cathedral worthy of the diocese.

The Vicar of St Michael's, the Revd E. G. Castle, while agreeing the possible advantageous claims which that church might have, thought it would be prudent to leave it out of contention. When the amendment was put to the vote, it was lost having only nine votes in favour. So far there had been no motion in favour of St Thomas's, and the Revd H. Durrant now moved a second amendment, that St Thomas's should be the pro-cathedral and Mr C. T. Wood seconded.

Change of Mind

The Rural Dean next spoke explaining that he had changed his mind. The balance of his judgement had been in favour of St Mary's because there was a considerable amount of ground in the Portsea parish which could be available for building. Now, however, he had the benefit of the unanimous opinion of all those dioceses where parish churches had been changed into pro-cathedrals. He referred particularly to those of Wakefield, Coventry, Bradford and Sheffield which, with one voice, had declared that it was impossible to carry on parochial work in a church which was a pro-cathedral. Looked at impartially, this was the governing factor, he said. If they made St Mary's the cathedral, they must scrap the parish of Portsea, a parish which had been built up painfully and deliberately. He went on to discuss the difficulties which might arise in staffing such a church, particularly between the vicar and the dean, for one man could not possibly undertake the two tasks. There was a possible alternative of cutting up the existing parish which would be very expensive because he thought three or four new churches would have to be built, involving an outlay of perhaps £60,000, which might otherwise be spent on building a new cathedral.

The only alternative was St Thomas's which had its drawbacks and advantages. If St Mary's was chosen they would have burnt their boats for it would be for all time the cathedral of this place and the parish would be lost. This amendment was carried by 57 votes to 39.

Responsible Advice

On the following day – 17 October[74] – the Bishop took the chair at a meeting in the Green Row Rooms of members of the Winchester Diocesan Conference living within the boundaries of the proposed new diocese. It was not in any way an executive meeting, he said, but one which carried a great moral authority and should be regarded as responsible advice which no one else could give, of local representative opinion. The Rural Dean reproduced the points he had made the day before, adding that he feared that if St Mary's became the pro-cathedral, it would be the cathedral for all time with all its disadvantages, for it was never built for that purpose.

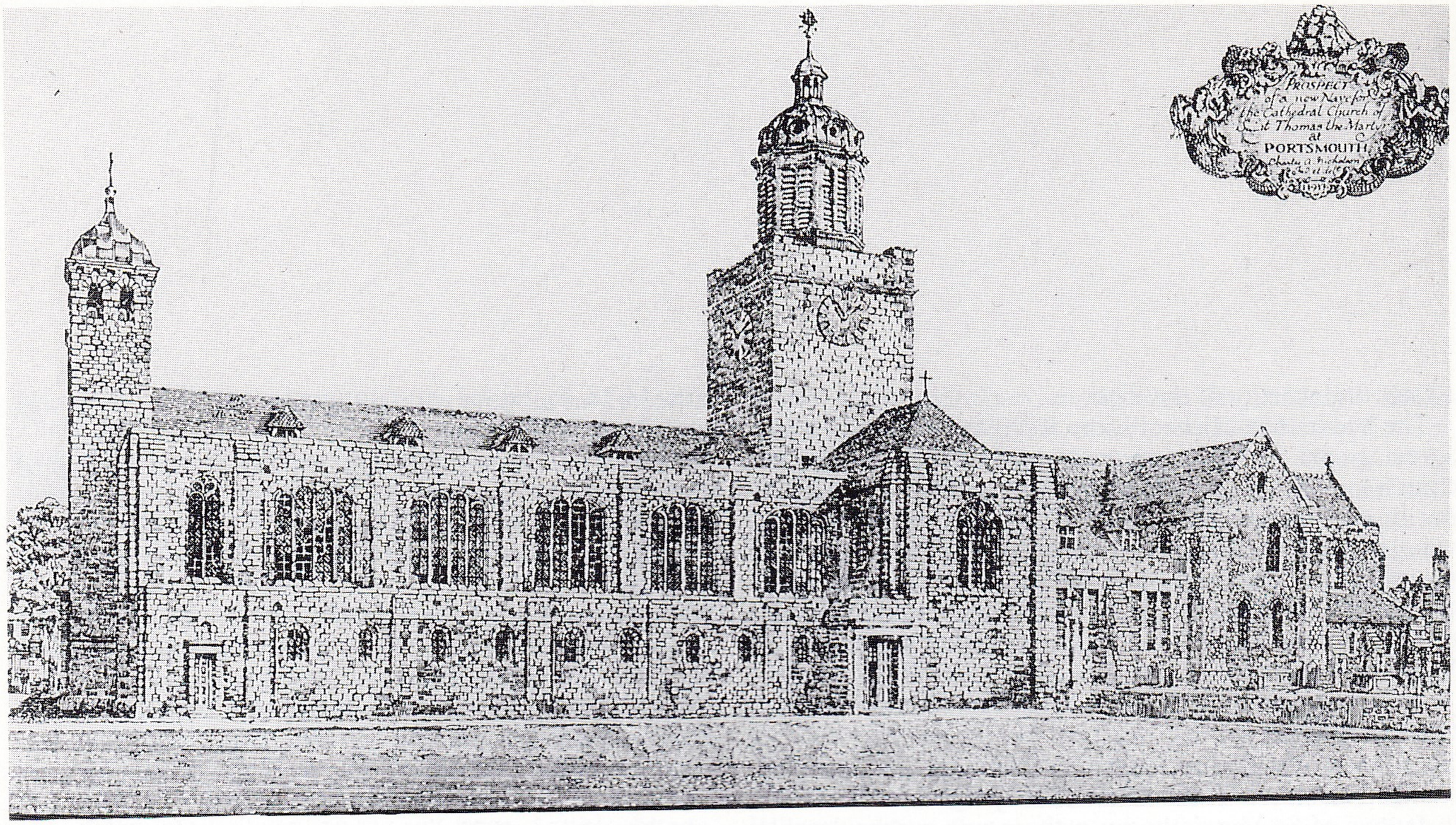
Speakers in favour of St Mary's reflected the feelings of many clergy and laymen, but the Vicar of St Mary's himself did not speak enthusiastically of the role of pro-cathedral and the effect that diocesan duties might have on the parish of Portsea.

The Bishop spoke in favour of St Thomas's and eventually the meeting voted 48 in favour and 18 against. Needless to say, this change of direction was greeted with astonishment in the town and started a controversy the echoes of which can still be heard. There was great disappointment at St Mary's, but it was realised that no final decision had yet been reached.

In November 1922 Canon Blackburne left St Mark's vicarage (North End) to become Archdeacon of Surrey[75] and his place as rural dean was taken by the Revd H. David, Vicar of St Thomas's. He clarified his attitude to the controversy at the next ruri-decanal conference. He had refrained from expressing any personal opinion, but wished it to be known that at St Thomas's there were no narrow or selfish interests, nor any desire for glorification, but a wish to do whatever might be in the best interests of the new diocese.

First Steps

In October 1924 the Vicar accepted the living of Holybourne, near Alton, his departure being much regretted. In November, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners resolved that an archdeaconry of Portsmouth was to be formed to consist of the mainland part of the new diocese and on 16 November came the announcement that the Revd Canon Neville Lovett had accepted the appointment to become the first Archdeacon and also Vicar of St Thomas's.[76] Educated at Sherborne School and Christ's College, Cambridge, he was ordained in 1892 and had served in five parishes before becoming Rector of St Mary's, Southampton, in 1912. While Rector of St Saviour's, Shanklin, he was Rural Dean of East Wight from 1905–08. He had a very high reputation in the civic life of Southampton, particularly in the sphere of education. Chairman of the Governors of the Endowed Schools, he had served many years on the Education Committee. For his services during the war he had received the CBE and was also Chaplain to the King. A member of the Church Assembly and a Proctor in Convocation, he had been a member of the Mission of Help sent by the Church to India in 1923. Canon Lovett was a prominent freemason and had been Chaplain of the Twelve Brothers Lodge and Provincial Grand Chaplain in 1905. He was also an accomplished writer. His departure was greatly regretted in Southampton. He was inducted as Vicar of Portsmouth on



6 February 1925. The first stage in the creation of the new diocese took place on 7 March 1925, when Canon Lovett was instituted as the first Archdeacon of Portsmouth.[77]

In October 1925, the Archdeacon asked the Bishop of Winchester to appoint a commission[78] of qualified persons to examine and make suggestions as to what church should be recommended as pro-cathedral until a cathedral could be provided.

December 1925 saw the nomination of the following persons to sit as commissioners:[79] Chairman: The Chancellor of the Diocese, Mr A. T. Lawrence; The Earl of Selbourne; The Archdeacon of Leicester; Canon Robinson of Chichester; the Revd C. A. Iremonger; the Mayor of Portsmouth; the Archdeacon of the Isle of Wight; Lt General Sir E. A. Athan to act as Honorary Secretary.

Their terms of reference were quite definite. Their only task was to recommend a temporary cathedral.

The Commission's Decision

The Commission, having studied written submissions, duly sat in Portsmouth Town Hall on 16 January 1926, to hear verbal pleas from four churches – St Mary's, St Thomas's, St Matthew's and St Cuthbert's. Representatives of the first three were heard. The Vicar of St Mary's, the Revd J. F. L. Southam, spoke of the heavy workload the parish entailed and opined that if his church were chosen, it should be upon a permanent basis, as it would not be right to disorganise the parish for a purely temporary measure. It was a question of the cathedral or the parish, but not both.

On 20 March 1926, the report was published.[80] First it was stressed that they were not called upon to nominate a permanent cathedral, but that church which might serve for that purpose for the time being. They had, in the final stages, eliminated St Cuthbert's, whose application had not been pressed, and St Matthew's. It was not considered necessary to give their reasons. Of the two remaining, they had decided to recommend St Thomas's, though two commissioners, the Revd C. A. Iremonger and the Mayor, dissented. The majority said that if they had been considering a permanent cathedral, St Thomas's would not have been chosen, but probably St Mary's. St Thomas's, they said, could be adapted as a temporary cathedral with a minimum of disturbance to its small parish; its accoustics were good and it was reasonably accessible, particularly for the Island and Gosport.

By this decision they had left the choice of the future diocese and its bishop completely unfettered. It would not be right to superimpose cathedral duties upon St Mary's unique parish. Such a step would require much expensive reorganisation or even the dissection of the parish.

Archdeacon Lovett's reaction to the decision is important. In a parochial letter he wrote[81]

> The report says expressly that this decision is not intended to prevent the new diocese at any time after it has commenced to function deciding to make St Mary's the cathedral or to take any other steps to provide Portsmouth with an adequate cathedral. This means that St Thomas's is called to do a service to the new diocese without honour or permanence. People do not think of the constant strain of upkeep, of special arrangements of the church or organising ordinations, occasional festivals of one kind or another, the demands upon choir, organists, clergy, vergers, etc. All this to be done without the ancient endowments which sustain the old foundations, and without a proper staff of cathedral clergy. The internal arrangements of the church have to be specially adapted to meet the requirements, the finances are continuously difficult and the demands upon the time of whoever is in charge are most exacting. To

Nicholson's drawing showing the grouping of the new nave with the old Church as seen from the High St.

all this St Thomas's is asked to face up, knowing that it may be left eventually as a temporary expedient which has served its purpose.

This, he thought, was in the right spirit of the Christian Church, to serve without thought of gain, and he was sure that all at St Thomas's would tackle the job wholeheartedly. He went on

> Let us make St Thomas's, while it is a cathedral everything possible in convenience and beauty to serve the diocese and let us gladly welcome the coming of a day when, by a new cathedral or by the release of St Mary's from its vast parochial responsibilities, the cathedral purpose can be served better than by our dear old parish church. There are those who think the ultimate solution may be found by an extension westward. However that may be, our immediate task is to fit the interior of the church for cathedral purposes.

Sir Charles Nicholson, the Diocesan Architect, was to be consulted. Nicholson's plans for reordering the church were made known.[82] The seating accommodation was to be rearranged to enlarge the space in the sanctuary and in front of the chancel arch. A site for the bishop's throne was to be provided. A room in the tower was to be made more accessible to provide an additional vestry. It was Sir Charles' intention that on entering the west door, one would seem to be leaving a great nave to pass within the screen to a choir. Truly prophetic thoughts.

St Thomas's officially became the pro-cathedral on 1 May 1927 and by the end of the month it was known that Archdeacon Lovett was to become the first Bishop of Portsmouth.

The New Status

Archdeacon Neville Lovett, CBE, MA was consecrated Bishop on St James's Day, 25 July 1927, in Westminster Abbey.[83] To bring St Thomas's to its full pro-cathedral status, a great service of Hallowing[84] was held on the evening of 4 October 1927 conducted by the Right Revd Theodore Woods, Bishop of Winchester, and to make the occasion fully diocesan, similar services were held in the seven rural deaneries. Finally, on 6 October, the first Bishop of Portsmouth was enthroned in his Cathedral.[85] All branches of Church, Civic and Service life were represented in the packed building. First a 'God Speed' oration from the Bishop of Winchester before the three customary knocks on the closed door from the excluded Bishop of Portsmouth were heard. His formal admission was followed by prayers, the reading of the Mandate from the Archbishop of Canterbury, the oaths of Fidelity and Loyalty and a hymn. The Bishop was then enthroned by the Archdeacon of Canterbury with 'all the Rights, Dignities, Honours, Privileges, Prerogatives and Pre-eminences whatsoever to him belonging' followed by the blessing. In his sermon, Bishop Lovett looked forward to the life of the new Diocese of Portsmouth and Wight and dedicated himself to its service.

The interregnum at the vicarage was ended on 2 November when the Very Revd Bernard Williams was inducted as Vicar and first Provost of Portsmouth.[86]

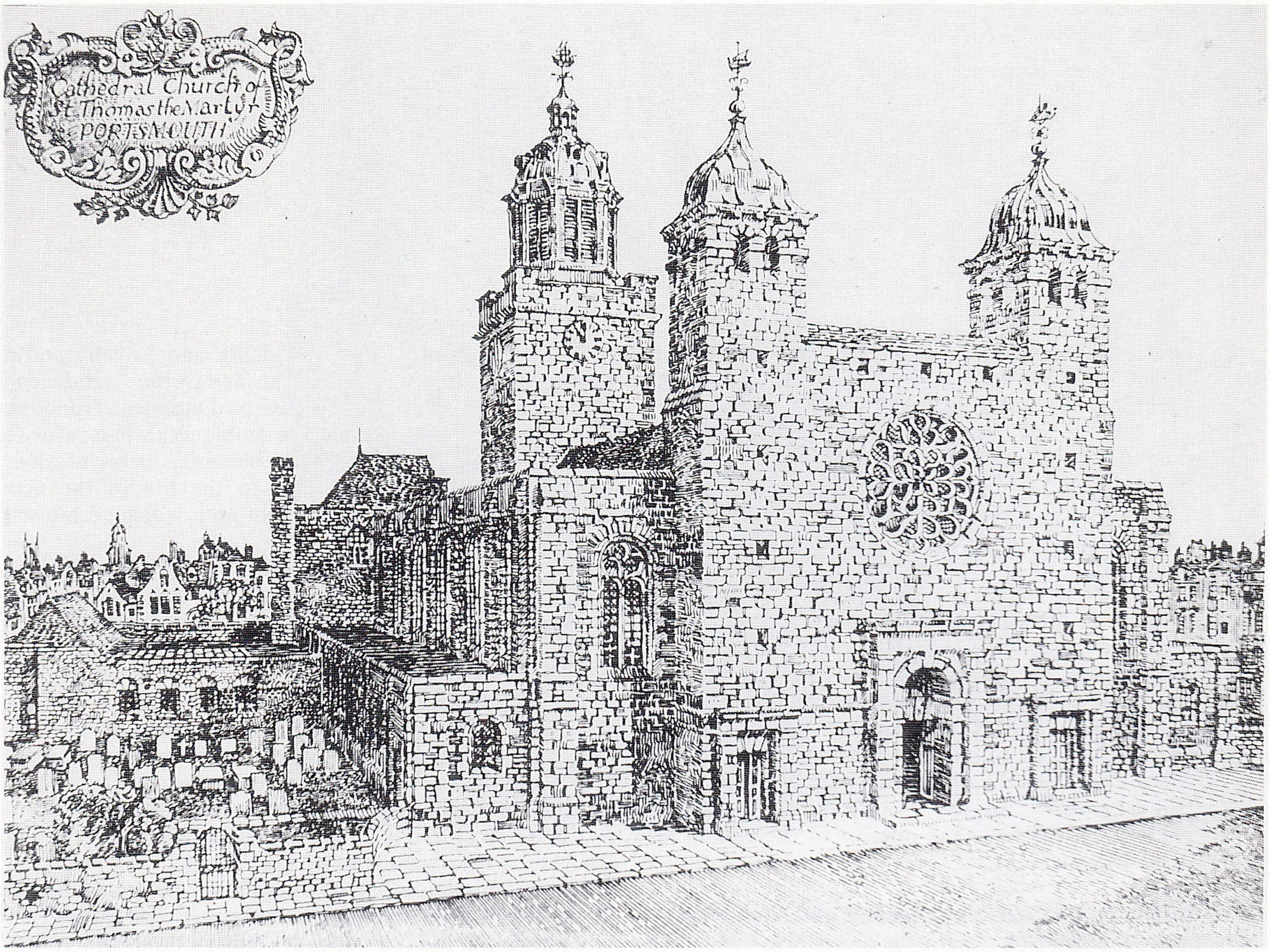
The Foundation

The first Diocesan Conference took place in the Guildhall.[87] The presidential address outlined the Cathedral Body or Foundation, not yet constituted, on the lines of a Provost, two Archdeacons, nine spiritual Canons and possibly nine Lay Canons. By May 1928 appointments to all these offices had been made and an omnibus service of installation was conducted by the Bishop.[88]

The cathedral now had its Chapter and the parish had its PCC. There were, however, no statutes and indeed nothing to define the relationship between these two groups or to govern the finances between them.[89] The Provost had sought advice from six parish church cathedrals but the only one to send any information of value was Leicester where a definite printed scheme had been in operation for some time. This scheme, after long and careful study and debate, was to become the basis of the Provisional Portsmouth Statutes.

It was decided that the PCC should continue to be responsible for the general finances of the church and that the Chapter should provide funds for the maintenance of the cathedral fabric and services. All projections showed that there would be a shortage of money. It was noted that the Leicester Diocese granted their cathedral £500 per annum, which made Portsmouth's £200 look meagre.[90] It was decided to form a body to consist of subscribers to a fund to meet current expenses and, in May 1929, the Guild of Friends came into being and Lord Woolmer agreed to become its first Master.[91]

The general shortage of money became painfully apparent in January 1930 when it was announced that the Diocesan Board of Finance was reducing the cathedral grant from £200 to £150 which presaged a deficit balance in the accounts.[92] This was aired at the October Diocesan Conference. The normal income of the Board of Finance was insufficient to meet the see's bare needs.[93] The average quota paid in by each of the seven deaneries was under 70 per cent of requirements. The Board issued a challenge to the parishes' sense of duty to pay their quotas in full and to try to raise 15 per cent above it. Were all the doubts



about the finances of a Diocese of Portsmouth coming true? Was it a pauper diocese? Only the most stringent economy in every branch of diocesan work and the anonymous help of a few wealthy individuals kept it solvent.

Before Parliament rose for the Summer Recess in 1931, the Cathedrals Measure was given Royal Assent.[94] This Act provided for schemes for the new dioceses and parish church cathedrals very much on the lines of the provisional statutes already in operation in Portsmouth. This scheme, modified as necessary, was submitted to the new Cathedral Commissioners. There was a great deal of discussion and correspondence during 1932 about these statutes. One of the contingent changes was that a Cathedral Council,[95] the composition of which was fully set out, should be formed and that it should be the corporate and governing body of the cathedral. This removed all statutory status from the PCCs of parish church cathedrals. One of the difficulties was the objection of the Commission to the title of Lay Canon. Two other cathedrals had this order, namely Southwark and Leicester who, with Portsmouth, wished to retain it. Agreement was successfully reached in March 1933.

The revised statutes as previously agreed were finally confirmed by an order in Council dated 15 July 1935.[96] On Tuesday 1 October 1935 the final meeting of the Provisional Chapter took place.[97] The Chapter Clerk reported that the necessary elections of Canons and Lay Canons had taken place to provide a Cathedral Council as required by the Cathedrals Commission. This final meeting was immediately followed by the first meeting of the Council of Portsmouth Cathedral.[98] It is important to note that the word 'provisional' had disappeared and any mention of a pro-cathedral had ceased.

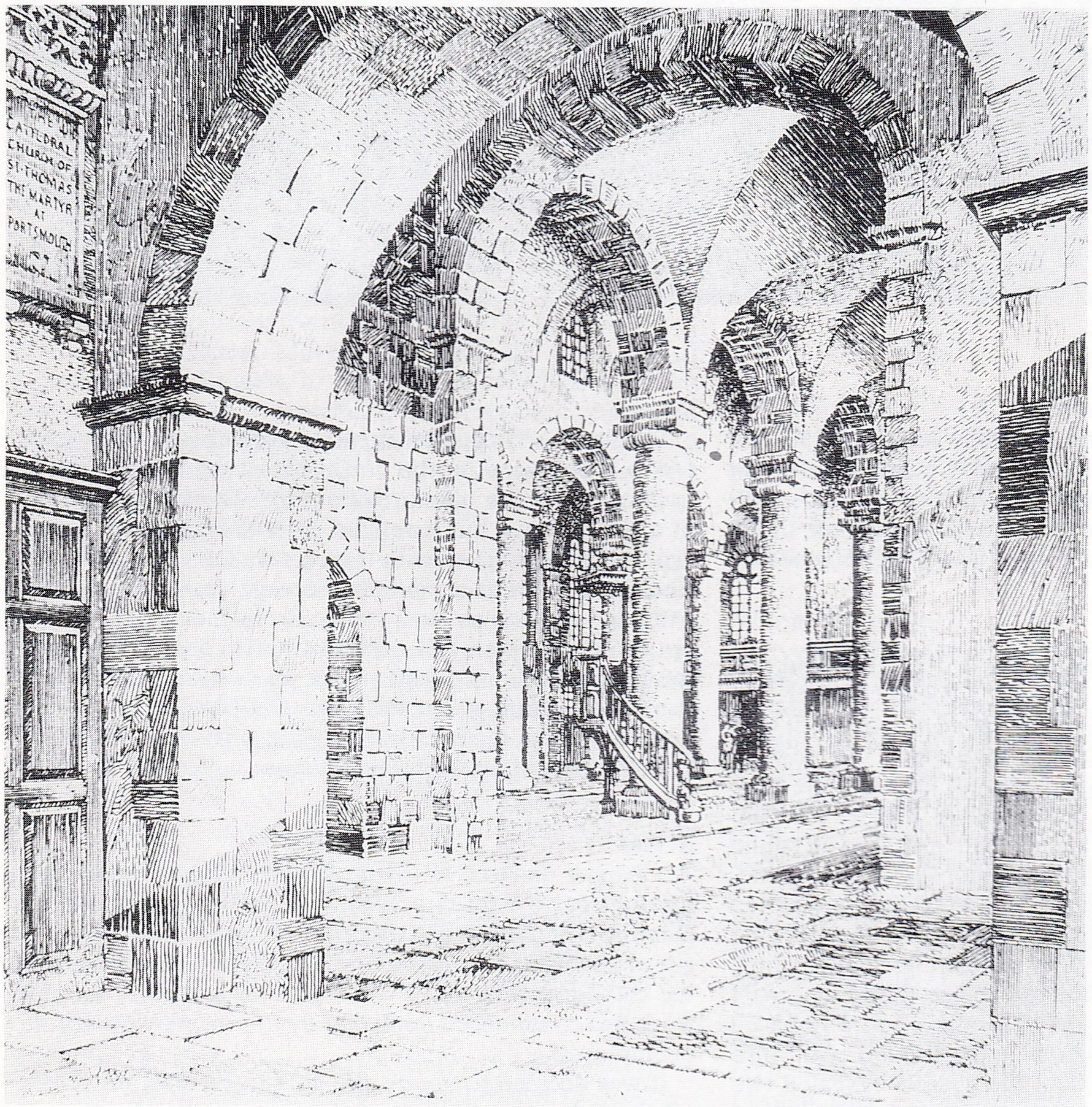
Property Purchases

It should be borne in mind that an extension of St Thomas's church westward had been mentioned to the Commission as a possibility in 1926. In June 1929 there arose the likelihood of some slum property to the west of the cathedral coming on the market.[99] This was a matter of concern to the Bishop for he realised that if this property was bought by St Thomas's, it would be the first step towards making it the permanent cathedral. Before this was done, full consultation with the Chapter was imperative. A small committee to consider the expediency of acquiring it was formed. The Chapter minute records that the Bishop stated that, so far as he was concerned, he 'had no intention of moving his stool to another cathedral'.[100]

In October 1930 Lay Canon Brutton reported the position regarding the property to the Chapter.[101] The Bishop said he was anxious for ownership so that plans for the future development could be produced. It was desirable, he said, to come into the open, and this could not be done without ownership. By December the preliminary moves

'Nicholson's' west front is shown with two Domed Stair Turrets with Ship Vanes in Character with the Old Tower.

Nicholson's new nave from the Harrison Memorial aisle looking south west.

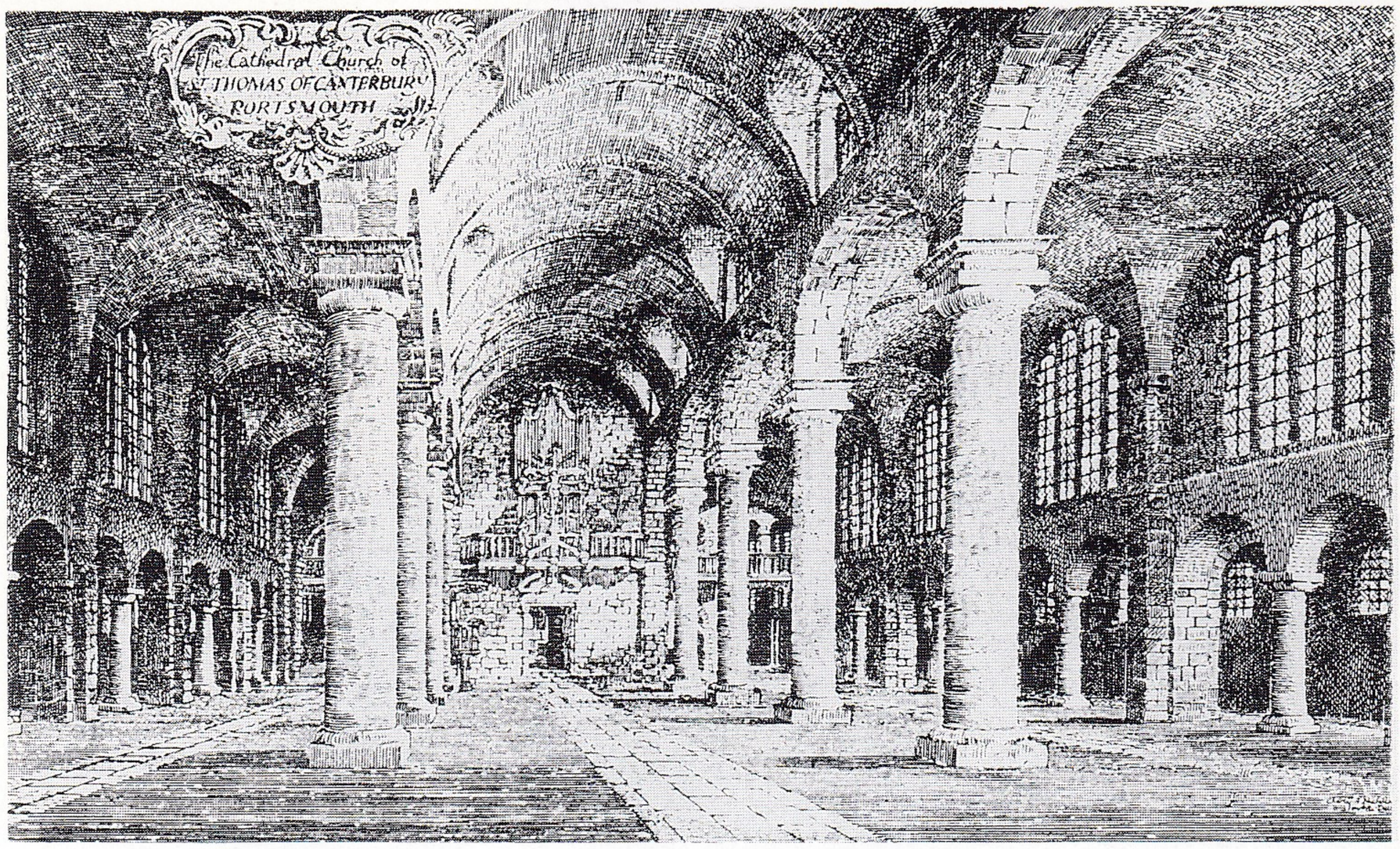


were completed and four trustees were appointed. Debentures amounting to £4,500 were promised privately and negotiations between Hobbs and Brutton, Solicitors, and Hall Pain and Foster, Estate Agents, led to the completion of the deal.[102] It is important to note that the internal finances of the cathedral were not involved in these property transactions.

The Bishop said that the question of where Portsmouth Cathedral was to be was now being finally settled. The Chapter was undertaking the responsibility for an enterprise which would require great care and attention to business details. The property having been acquired, he wished to ask an eminent architect to provide a drawing to show the public what was proposed. This would stimulate interest and assist the provision of funds.

In March 1930 the Chapter heard that No. 97 High Street, abutting on the churchyard, was to be sold by auction.[103] Enquiries disclosed that it was owned by Winchester College. Approaches were made and it was agreed that the cathedral could buy the property for the reserve price of £500 which was raised by a loan at 4 per cent from the diocese. It was planned to pull the house down to open the aspect of the cathedral to the High Street.

The second purchase of a house on the north side of the



High Street came in February 1931, when No. 90 was bought for £850.[104] The policy of buying property adjacent to the cathedral was to continue over the next years until all between Oyster Street and Lombard Street and all the buildings on the east side of Oyster Street were owned by the cathedral.

Maintenance of the Fabric

Provost Bernard Williams resigned in July 1930 and was succeeded by Canon T. H. Masters, CBE in October.[105]

January 1931 brought the news that all was not well with the ceilings in the north and south transepts.[106] These were flat and made of wood having been put up when the nave was rebuilt in the late 17th century style. Plaster was falling in the Lady Chapel and a crack had appeared all round the cornice of the ceiling. Examination by Mr J. Croad, the builder, revealed that supporting brackets were rotten and that the death-watch beetle had been at work. Sir Charles Nicholson advised that the ceilings had to come down and it was decided not to replace them. The roof space was to remain open and the rafters to be replaced where necessary and the whole to be treated with anti-beetle solution. The removal of the ceilings revealed two filled-in windows. In the north transept, a round window, and in the south a small lancet. Both were subsequently opened and glazed.

Planning the Extension

At the request of the Bishop, Sir Charles Nicholson had produced a first sketch of an extension building,[107] which he submitted to the Chapter in October 1932. He explained his ideas and invited criticism.

Lay Canon Pilcher suggested the building of a nave on the north side of the present church with the altar in line with the present altar.[108] This might necessitate the pulling down of the old north transept. However, the removal of the north transept was thought undesirable and Nicholson thought the north transept could form the eastern end of such a nave.

Sir Charles Nicholson drew up three plans:[109] the first (A) was of a nave on the north side of the church with its eastern end in the old north transept. The second (B) was of a similar nave but extended eastwards making its eastern wall co-terminous with the east wall of the old church. The third (C) was a nave at the west end of the church extended on its own axis. After careful consideration, the option was for plan (C), and Sir Charles Nicholson was so informed. With his assent, these plans were submitted to the Central Council for the Care of Churches for consideration. They made some suggestions with which Sir Charles Nicholson and the Chapter agreed after slight amendment.

Action

A Chapter meeting notified as 'Very Urgent' was called for Saturday 4 February 1933.[110] The Bishop said that the meeting had to be called urgently to consider the offer of a gift of £8,000 and a second one of £500 for the extension of the cathedral. The offer was made on condition that the work was commenced immediately to provide work for the unemployed.

It was decided to accept the gifts to be used for paying off the debenture holders of the property on the sites, to clear the site as necessary and to proceed with the building as might be decided.

The Bishop opened the Cathedral Extension Fund account at Lloyds Bank, Fareham, with the £8,500 in hand.[111] The debenture holders were paid off and the donor of £8,000 increased his gift by returning his £500 debenture share.

To keep the public informed, the following announcement appeared in the *Portsmouth Evening News*

> Plans for the extension of Portsmouth Cathedral have been prepared by Sir Charles Nicholson, who was responsible for the alteration of the Parish Church of Portsmouth for the purposes of the Cathedral of the Diocese. These plans will be sub-

A general view of Nicholson's nave with its ceilings vaulted in concrete and its three tiers of windows.

> mitted to the Central Council of the Church Assembly for the Care of Churches. The cost of the building is likely to be in the neighbourhood of £70,000. The initiation of the scheme has been brought into the near future by two generous anonymous gifts of £8,500 and £500 received by the Bishop: a condition of these gifts was that steps be taken at once. Out of this sum the additional ground required has already been purchased. Action is now being taken to apply the balance to the first stages of the work in connection with the scheme.

The next step in the progress of the extension was the production of a pictorial brochure,[112] the purpose of which was simply to announce the scheme. The Bishop did not consider it opportune to urge individuals to give. The cost of publicity was to be met by the rents from the houses which had been bought.

The question of the cathedral was not to be left in the air; it was the deliberate intention to go forward with the extension. The estimated cost of the scheme was increased to £75,000 to provide a sum for maintenance and it is important to remember that no provision whatever for any endowment had been made when the Diocese of Winchester was divided.

Sir Heath Harrison died on 16 May 1934 and it quickly became known that the original anonymous gifts had come from him and Lady Harrison. She subsequently increased her gift by a further £3,000 towards the completion of the north choir aisle which she wished to be named the Heath Harrison aisle as a memorial to him.[113]

Three stages of building were envisaged – North Aisle, Vestries, North Transept and Heating Chamber; South Aisle and South Transept; Commencement of the Nave.[114] Tenders for the first two stages were received in March 1935.[115] The lowest from Walden & Sons of Henley on Thames for Stage A was accepted and a contract was signed in May. Work commenced on 4 June. Some arrangement to close the west end of the structure until completion was foreseen.

Building and the Appeal

The year 1936 was important for the departure of Bishop Lovett, translated to the See of Salisbury, and the consecration and enthronement of the Venerable Frank Partridge, Archdeacon of Oakham.[116] The country had passed through the trauma of the abdication of Edward VIII and 1937 was set to be the coronation year of George VI and Queen Elizabeth.

The Lord Mayor and the Bishop were united in their belief that the right moment for a public appeal for funds for the cathedral extension had come.[117] The sum required was £75,000. This was to be divided into 300,000 shares of five shillings each, for which colourful certificates would be issued. The Coronation Appeal opened with a munificent gift of £10,000 from Sir Dymoke White.[118]

The dedication of the first stage of building took place on 8 May 1937 and at the close of the celebrations the Bishop was able to announce that £20,000 was already in hand.[119] The contract for the second stage was signed on 2 June with the same builders including the proviso, as before, that local labour should be employed.[120]

Building forged ahead and, by April 1938, Sir Charles Nicholson was able to present tenders for the nave which was planned finally to have seven bays.[121] The contract was made for three bays, with the option of building a fourth in six months and a fifth at the end of nine months.[122] This arrangement was the result of careful examination of the present and future financial situation. The second stage of the building was dedicated on 16 July 1938.[123]

Provost Masters retired owing to ill-health in September[124] and it was not until May 1939 that the Revd E. N. Porter Goff, MA was installed as Provost.[125]

This period was heavy with the unknown dangers of war. Civil Defence and Air Raid Precautions were much in evidence and churches were looking to the safety of their valuables. The Provost and Lay Canon Brutton consulted the chief of the Fire Brigade who thought that the cathedral would stand up against fire; he recommended the purchase of two stirrup pumps. To help meet pressing financial needs an overdraft of £8,700 with Lloyds Bank was approved. War against Germany was declared on 3 September 1939. It was clear that building plans would have to be abandoned and the temporary west wall built. Final projects such as siting memorials in suitable positions, the arrangement of the gallery and the position of the lay canons' stalls were put in hand.

Old St Thomas's extended westward by transepts and a nave of three bays was growing very adequately into the Cathedral of the Diocese of Portsmouth without losing its identity as a much-loved parish church; but Sir Charles Nicholson's vision was not realised and the nation was again at war.

APPENDIX

Arms of the Bishop of Portsmouth

Per fesse or and gules, in chief upon waves of the sea proper a lymphad sable, and in base two keys conjoined wards outwards in bend, the uppermost or, the other argent, a sword interposed between them in bend sinister also argent, pommel and hilt or and for crest, a bishop's mitre proper.

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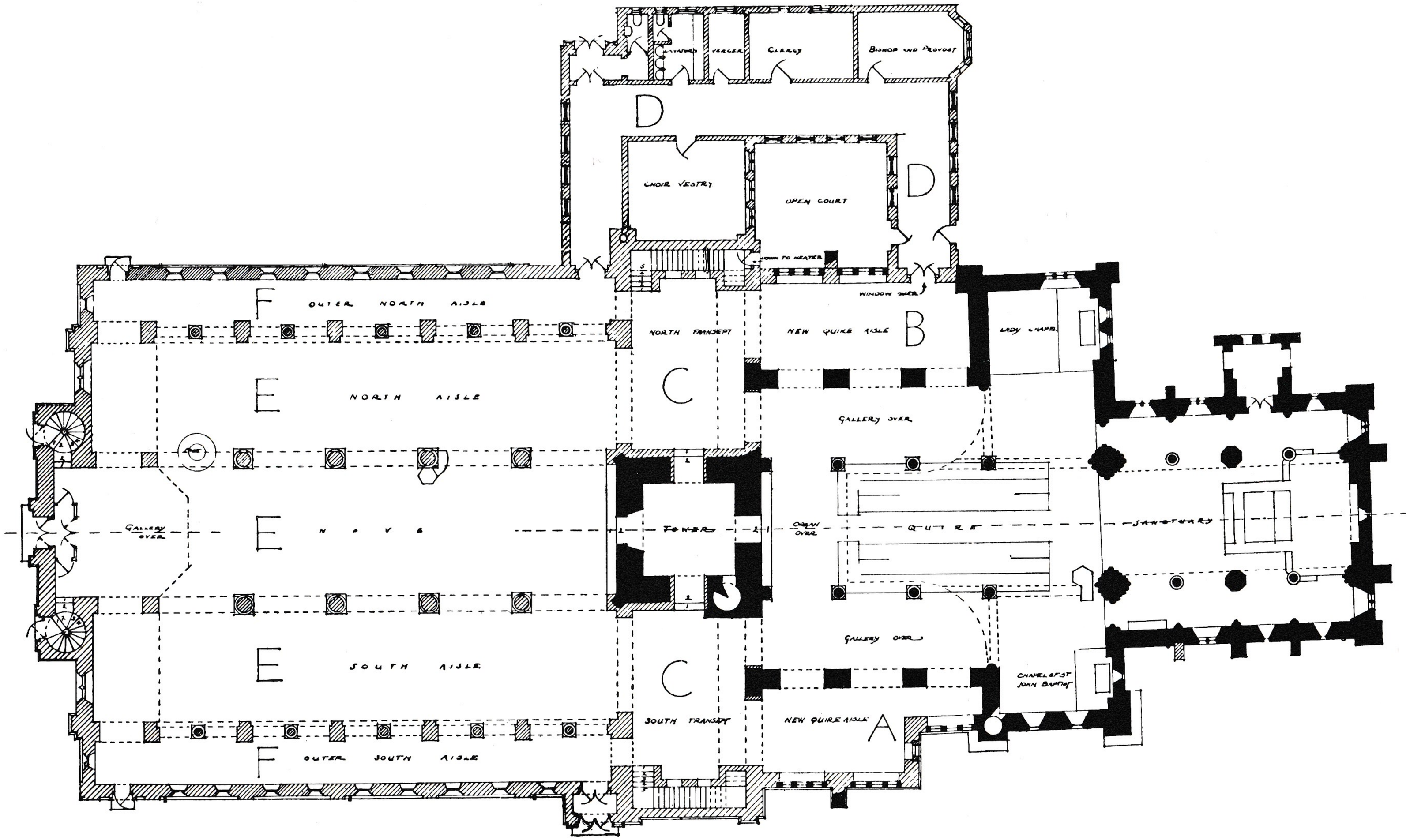
Within the limits of a Portsmouth Paper it has only been possible to give a bare outline of four decades of parish history. For those who wish for more detail, I have made a log of the story of St Thomas's from 1900 to 1939 which is being prepared in pamphlet form and will be available in the PCRO.

NOTE ON THE AUTHOR

A Londoner by birth and educated at Dulwich College, Kenneth Barnard was married in Portsmouth Cathedral in 1933. After service in the Army throughout the war in North Africa and Europe he came to live in the city and he and his family became regular members of the Cathedral congregation.

In 1960, with a number of kindred spirits, he formed the Guild of Guides who welcome and inform visitors to the Cathedral. Upon retirement from business in 1965, he joined the Cathedral staff as Lay Assistant, relinquishing the position in 1967. From 1973 he was Provost's Warden and Lay Canon. He became Lay Canon Emeritus on 31 December 1983.



The Walls shown black are those of the Old Church. This is the original plan which was subsequently modified in some details.

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